a part of Maharashtra at that time Maharashtra Government had given this request to Centre Government.

I would like to request the Centre to meat their long pending demand of the freedom fighters of Goa and provide them pension at the earliest.

(xi) Need to provide special grants to trusts promoting welfare of Muslim minority community in the country.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): The Muslim minorities are still far below in education and Government jobs. There is urgent need to help more Muslim boys and girls, especially from poor families to get access to all fields of education, including higher and technical education. More representation has to be ensured for Muslims in Government jobs. More funds have to be allotted for free education of Muslims. A sum of Rs. 1500 crores be released to Moulana Azad Trust to safeguard these causes. Other Muslim trusts working in this regard may also be released grants so that they can sustain.

(xii) Need to set up joint venture of NTPC and CCI for Making PPC Cement by Utilising Fly-ash

[Translation]

DR. CHARAN DAS MAHANT (Janjgir): Mr. Chairman, Sir, many directions by the Hon'ble Supreme Court are available with regard to stopping of environmental pollution. As per the environment Ministry's Notification dated 14.9.99, fly-ash produced by Coal based power plants is to be used. 65000 tonne coal is burnt daily in Korba (Chhattisgarh) and about 26000 tonne fly-ash is produced daily. There are 82 Thermal Power station in India which produce 8.5 crore tonne of fly-ash each year containing lead, Zinc and heavy metal like arsenic silicon which are proving very dangerous for ground water, plants and animals. At present the Ministry of Energy can find a solution to this problem of manufacturing PPC cement by setting up Joint Venture of NTPC and CCI. The country can be protected from water, air and land pollution along with the safety of the families of officers and employees of CCI unit at Korba and Mandar of Chhattisgarh and also at other places in the country and fly-ash can be effectively utilised.

Therefore, it is requested that Industry Department should take initiative in this direction for setting up joint venture of NTPC and CCI.

(xiii) Need to Solve Acute Water Problem in Jalesar Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh

PROF. S.P. SINGH BAGHEL (Jalesar): Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards those villages of Jalesar Constituency in Uttar Pradesh where serious diseases are spreading by drinking contaminated underground water. Minerals chemicals are in excess in underground water of Mahopur, Areye, Naglapur, Sikandpur, Kutukpur, Raipur, Chilasani, Ramgarh, Ummergarh and Naglavanshi Nagla Nauji villages of Jalesar Tehsil of Etah District of Jalesar Parliamentary Constituency. The water there is hard and due to excess floride in water Teeth fall at the age of 35-40 years and people there have to defecate 4-5 times in a day. Birds etc. are also dying by drinking this water. Animals are also sent elsewhere due to shortage of drinking water. People become hunch-backed in some villages by drinking contaminated water. It is requested that the source of sweet and pure water be identified with the help of Central underground water survey.

14.31 hrs.

THE HAJ COMMITTEE BILL, 2002

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for this Bill is one hour and I have got a list of six speakers. Therefore, I request all of you to be as brief as possible.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): Madam Chairman, I will be as brief as possible.

I beg to move:

"That the Bill to establish a Haj Committee of India and State Haj Committees for making arrangements for the pilgrimage of Muslims for Haj, and for matters connected therewith, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The Haj Committee Bill, 2002 seeks to replace the Haj Committee Act of 1959, which in turn replaced the Port Haj Committee Act of 1932. While the basic ritual of performing Haj, the reasons behind which Muslim men and women of all age groups and of all financial background seek to perform Haj in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has remained unchanged, the modalities of

performing the Haj, the systems that need to be put into place, the means of transport and the number of Hajis travelling from India every year have all undergone a sea-change since the Haj Committee Act 1959 was brought into being. It is keeping this in mind that the Government has sought to bring forward the Haj Committee Bill, 2002 to replace this Haj Committee Act to change a number of fundamental aspects of the Haj Committee Act of 1959 that needed a change.

First and foremost was the centrality of Mumbai in the pervious Haj Committee Act. This was natural in 1959 because by and large—not by and large, but all—Hajis left by ship from Bombay. It has over the last few years changed significantly. Last year there was no Haji going by ship. In fact, not only there was no Haji going by ship, but Hajis left by air from ten different points of embarkation from India. This in itself is a major change. The number of Hajis has shot up now to a point where from 24,000 in 1992 the number has gone up to 72,000 this year travelling under the Central Haj Committee.

Prior to 1981, all formalities relating to what is called the 'Qurrah', which involved drawing of lots of those who would travel for Haj, were performed by the Central Haj Committee in Mumbai. After 1981, all this work was decentralised to the State Haj Committees.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur): Sir, it should be Mumbai not Bombay.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please to not disturb. Let the Minister finish what he is saying. Please sit down.

[Translation]

It will be Mumbai. You sit down.

[English]

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Aside from the fact that it was Bombay when I was there, when all this was being done, it was still Bombay. So, I am talking from a historic perspective.

Now these State Haj Committees have a greater role to play. Keeping all this in mind and the fact that there are a large number of Hajis, we felt that both the Central and the State Haj Committees needed to be reconstituted and their orientation needed to be changed.

And for this, a new legislation needed to be brought forward. At this point, I would like to place on record the appreciation for my Ministry for the work done and Shri M.O.H. Farook, Member of Parliament, for the initial hard work and the ground work that went in with spirit.

I would like the House to take this Bill into consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill to establish a Haj Committee of India and State Haj committees for making arrangements for the pilgrimage of Muslims for Haj, and for matters connected therewith, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK (Pondicherry): Madam, I rise to welcome the Haj Committee Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already been appreciated by the Minister.

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK: Thank you, Madam. This is a D-Day for us. In fact, we have been working for this for the last 18-20 years and at last, we are able to get through these things.

A Committee was appointed as early as in 1970s and I was asked to head the Committee. I have gone through all the stages. Representation had been received, educated Muslim people's views had been looked into, *ulemas* had been consulted, and a comprehensive Bill had come at that time. I do not know what happened later. To my disappointment, it had been put in cold storage. Afterwards, Shri Salim Sherwani who was the Minister of State called a meeting and then the whole work had been restarted. We did the work. While doing that work, we wanted to see that representations from various parts of the country should be adequately looked into, it should be broad-based and at the same time, more democratic also. With that basis in mind the Bill has been brought forth. I am thankful to the Minister for having brought forward the bill. I must tell that this Government has been kind enough to accommodate all the Haj pilgrims who had applied last year and we are able to do some substantial work.

There are a few things which I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister. In page 2, Clause 3, of the Bill, it is said that the Committee shall have its Headquarters at Mumbai. I am not against having the Headquarters at Mumbai. But is it mandatory on their

[Shri M.O.H. Farook]

part to have it only in Mumbai? The Minister should reconsider this point. It is not necessary to have it only in Mumbai. It can be anywhere else also. At a later stage, if a contingency comes over there, then you have to go according to the Act and we cannot do anything. So, is it mandatory and is it necessary to have it only in Mumbai? ...*(Interruptions)* That is one thing that I would like to ask you. We are not against having it in Mumbai. ...*(Interruptions)*

The second point which I want to bring to your notice is this. For the present, it is going on in the correct direction. What is the work of the Haj Committee abroad? In fact, I have given an amendment that "after India", you may insert "abroad also". If it is technically difficult for the Minister to do it, then I am not pressing at all. But what I wanted to impress upon the Minister is that this Haj Committee should also have some work to do in Saudi Arabia. With the passing of time, a mere Haj Committee is not going to help. On the other hand, it is a Government-to-Government contact which is being done because they have brought it to such a level that only the Ministers have to look into it. The Minister was kind enough last time to go over there and sign the Haj Agreement for 2001.

Now, the Haj Bill of 2002 has come. Therefore, I feel that it is necessary that it has to be passed. I do not know about the diplomatic immunities that are there. But I personally feel that the Minister should look into this matter. This Haj Committee should do the work which we are doing now in Saudi Arabia because it is necessary.

The Bill is going to be passed today. We support the Bill out and out. We would like to see that this Bill is applied for the coming Haj period because we have already started the work and we are doing the work which is needed to be done. It should be expedited and it has to be done on war footing. Otherwise, it would create difficulties. There are some technical difficulties which we are going to face. You have to make the rules. What I am suggesting is that you prepare the rules immediately. You can keep them ready so that it can be put in the House in the coming Session. State Haj Committees can be organised in this direction. My only plea is that all the activities can be coincided. This Act should be implemented immediately. This is what exactly is my plea to the hon. Minister. The Government should take it up. For that whatever action is necessary we should try to do it. This is all what I want to say. I congratulate the Minister. I am the happiest person today. I have been working for this for the last eighteen years. Now, this has come true. I must congratulate this Government for having brought this Act.

[Translation]

SHRI ALI MOHD. NAIK (Anantnag): Madam Chairman, I would like to congratulate the Government for bringing this Bill in this House. I would also like to congratulate the young hon'ble Minister for this. I would also like to congratulate Minister of Civil Aviation and the Prime Minister that they have increased the number of direct Haj flights from many places. We had been demanding in Kashmir for the 50 years for a direct Haj flight but it was never given. But now direct flights are available from Kashmir, Kerala, Lucknow and from many other places. I want to congratulate to both the Ministers for this. This bill contains two-three important things for which I would like to support this Bill strongly, one of them is that Haj Committee would be constituted on democratic lines. It is a very good thing.

Secondly for the first time there is accountability in Haj Committee. I do not know what type of accountability was there earlier, but now for the first time the Committee will be answerable to the Parliament. Earlier complaints regarding financial and other things will be no more there Haj Committee has to perform several duties. One of them is that training will be imparted to the Hazis. I have to make a suggestion that Government of India should produce a film at the time of Haj and that film should be distributed amongst State Haj committees and they should show the film to the people. Then people will understand that how Haj is performed. This is very necessary. I have been to Saudia Arabia. As per my experience what I feel and what is the desire of the people is that.

[English]

There should be a film made on the performance of Haj.

[Translation]

The duration of Haj Yatra is five days. It should be shown in the States of India where training is given to Hazis so that they could perform the frija of Haj in right manner. Even I told earlier that Government deserves congratulations for bringing this Bill. This Government brought this Bill. Even earlier several attempts were made to bring this Bill. This Act will not be completed unless rules are framed in this regard. Acts are made but rules are not framed immediately, and hence purpose of the Act is defeated.

[English]

It is because of rules. Rules are not framed. So, they always remain violated. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister that he should take it as a personal case to get the rules framed and brought before this House. After that, this Act can be implemented.

With these words, I strongly support this Bill. I would request the House that it should be passed immediately.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (Murshidabad): Respected Madam, I rise to support the Haj Committee Bill. This Bill has been brought forward in place of the first Haj Committee Act of 1959. After 43 years, this Bill has been placed before Parliament. I know about that. This was drafted in 1997. After five years, it has been placed before Parliament. I welcome this Bill because it is better late than never.

Before going into the details of the Bill, I would like to share with the House what type of change has taken place in the total scenario in the last 43 years. First, earlier all pilgrims were going for Haj pilgrimage by sea from the Port of Mumbai. Now, it has been discontinued from 1995. Secondly all the pilgrims are going for Haj travelling by air by chartered flights from different parts of the country. Third, the number of pilgrims has increased rapidly in the last one decade. Already, the hon. Minister has informed that in 2002, it was 72,000 pilgrims. In 1991, it was only 18,299 pilgrims who performed Haj. In 2000, the number of flights operated was 191. So, everybody feels that a lot of pilgrims are going to Jeddah and Mecca to perform their religious work.

In this regard, I would say that a lot of decentralisation work already has taken place in the meantime as far as application and other things are concerned. The hon. Minister has already mentioned here about it. Now, the work has been decentralised. It has been given to the State Haj Committee now. The earlier perspective was that the Ministry had given weightage to Maharashtra, especially to Mumbai from where the pilgrims were going by sea. But the perspective has changed. I have already mentioned about it. Many of my friends have told earlier about it. So, in this changed perspective, I would demand that the Office of the Central Haj Committee should be shifted to Delhi, the National Capital, from Mumbai. It is very much convenient to everybody. Mumbai Office can act as a Regional Office. So, this is my first demand. I would like to bring this fact to the attention of the hon. Minister.

I would be very brief. So far as the management of *Haj* facilities is concerned, it handles Rs. 400 crore every year as part of Pilgrimage Fund. Parliament is not informed about it. The accounts of *Haj* committee are not placed before Parliament or any other House. It is the public money. So, it is not only my suggestion but also my demand that a provision should be made in the present Bill to the effect that the accounts of *Haj* committee would be audited and placed before Parliament. At the present moment, none of us knows about the balance sheet and the accounts of *Haj* committee. We have been talking about handling of different types of funds. We have some news also in this regard. Management of *Haj* affairs would be transparent, if the *Haj* committee places its accounts and balance sheet before this august House.

Next is about the role of the *Haj* committee. Shri M.O.H. Farook has already mentioned that the role of the *Haj* committee is confined only to India. In the object of the Bill, it is said:

> "To collect and disseminate information useful to pilgrims, and to arrange orientation and training programmes for pilgrims;
>
> to advise and assist pilgrims during their stay at the embarkation points in India, while proceedings to or returning from pilgrimage, vaccination, etc
>
> to finalise the annual *Haj* plan with the approval of the Central Government, and execute the plan, including the arrangements for travel by air or any other remains, and to advise in matters relating to accommodations."

We all know it. But the major role has to be played not in India but in Jeddah, Mecca and Madina. Who would do it? Our mission should do this. But our practical experience says that our Mission has failed to do this job. Actually, somebody has told me that it was the work of the Mission, and somebody else has said that it was the work of Central *Haj* Committee. There is no coordination between the Central *Haj* Committee and the Mission. I would request our hon. Minister to look into this matter.

What type of difficulties the Hajis are facing? In a nutshell, I would like to mention that it is about the accommodation, especially in Jeddah and in Mecca, it is not up to the mark. Hon. Minister may say that an average of 2.5 to 3 sq. mtr. land is allotted. Most of the persons who avail this facility are aged people. This is not sufficient for them. We must look into it.

[Shri Moinul Hassan]

The next one is about the medical treatment of *Hajis*. I came to know that in the last *Haj* pilgrimage, only 250 medical practitioners were there. I would like to say that it was very much inadequate.

The hon. Minister has already told that there are ten embarkation points. I would like to demand for more embarkation points for the pilgrims.

Every *Haji* is trying to carry the sacred water called *abe jamjam*. At present, it is not possible to carry the sacred water along with them. In other flights, they are allowed to carry sacred water. In the mean time, they have lost their sacred water, which has created great repercussion among *Hajis*. I would request the hon. Minister to look into this and other *Haji*-related matters. For example, they request for hassle-free journey and hassle-free package plane but the difficulty is growing day-by-day.

Another point I would like to say is lack of coordination. Aged senior citizens of our country are going abroad. There is a lack of coordination in the major area in *Haj* operation. Here, authorities have failed completely. There is an utter lack of information regarding flight schedule to *Haj* pilgrims to Jeddah, etc.; dislocation in the schedule; delay in the schedule; and their relatives in India are kept in dark. They know nothing about their whereabouts.

On behalf of my Party, and on behalf of myself, I support this Bill. I would request the Minister that he must overcome all the lacuna and see that the journey of senior citizens of our country is made hassle-free.

With these words, I conclude.

*SHRI AKBOR ALI KHANDOKER (Serampore): Madam Chairperson, today this Bill for formation of Haj Committee has been moved by our hon. Minister. I am grateful to him and also to the Government of India to bring this Bill. I support this Bill. Today we are discussing about the formation of Haj Committee which will look into the arrangements for the pilgrimage of Muslims for Haj. It is a matter of regret that we have discussion umpteen ties on Mandir or Masjid but we never discuss about the basic change needed in the lives of the minority community. Who are the people who go for Haj? They are the aged people from 50 to over 70 who save their hard earned money with great difficulty and go for pilgrimage for Haj. They are from Bihar, UP, from Bengal and from any part of India. Haj Committee has done many commendable job. But there are some small matters which may seem small but are very important. These people who want to go for Haj belong to very poor family. Most of them are illiterate. They save whatever little amount of money they have. When they find they have the required amount for Haj pilgrimage, they undertake it. But by that time they become quite old. Then old people from far flung villages have not traveled by electric train or even by bus. How they would be able to travel by air? They do not know how to travel by air. i went myself for Haj two years back. We were in Delhi Airport. Before the plane took off, the pilgrims had to perform *wuzu*. While performing this, they threw water all over the toilet and the floor of the plane was spoilt. The authorities has to cancel that particular plane and arrange another new plane for the pilgrims. So my first plea to the Minister through you Madam and also to the Members of the Committee is to formulate some procedure so that these ignorant rustic people get some kind of training and orientation and aclimatise themselves in the new surroundings.

My second point is about the types of accommodation provided around the area of Haj. I am not saying that all the houses provided for the pilgrims are bad. But some houses are far from the Haj site and some are 3 storey buildings mostly without any lift. Most of the pilgrims are quite aged with frail body. It is difficult for them to go to their rooms through so many steps or to come down and walk long distance to reach the place of Haj. The hilly roads are also uneven and walking on that hazardous road and reaching Mecca becomes difficult for them. After the pilgrimage their return journey to the accommodation also becomes tiresome. Next problem they face is medical facility. It is true that Government of India provides large number of medical facilities. These facilities are available only in some particular centres. These illiterate ignorant aged village people have difficulty to reach these medical centres and get treatment for their ailment. I have my own experience when I undertook the journey for the Haj. I have seen that these aged people did not know where to go and get medical treatment. They were trying to locate the centre like a blind person. The Government of India, the Haj Committee have been doing a commendable job for the holy pilgrimage. But if they look into these small problems faced by the illiterate or half-literate villagers, they will do immense help to these people.

I would like to mention another problem. After the pilgrimage when they reach the airport for their return journey they have to wait there because of delay or cancellation of the plane they are supposed to board. As it is after paying for the pilgrimage, they spend the small

*English translation of the speech originally delivered in Bengali.

amount left for gifts for the near and dear ones. So these people sometimes do not have the money even to buy drinking water or to pay for bare necessities during their waiting time in the plane. The waiting time in the airport may vary from 24 hours to 48 hours. This happens because of negligence on the part of Government as well as the embassy. I have written many letters to the Government to pay attention to this type of problem faced by these people. The Haj Committee should widen its monitoring system so that these people do not encounter such situation.

One more thing I shall mention. There are some brokers who arrange for the Haj pilgrims privately. I request the Government to ban these private brokers so that they cannot exploit the poor villagers in the name of Haj. They charge huge amount of money from the poor villagers, make poor arrangements there, they keep them in the accommodation far off from the Haj site. These poor people suffer a lot due to these private brokers. They should be totally banned.

Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the House to another important issue although this is not related to the concerned Bill. A large number of children may be normal or handicapped are kidnapped from West Bengal and transferred to Saudi Arabia through Nepal or Bangladesh for begging. There is a vicious network which is wide spread in this area. Sometimes the people are caught and the children are made to return to our India. This is an embarrassment for the Government. I urge upon the Government to conduct a thorough enquiry into the incidences so that people involved in the shameful act must be booked and stringent punishment must be given to the culprits. Then only it will be possible to curb this criminal activity and do justice to the unfortunate children.

With these words after supporting the Bill and thanking you for giving me an opportunity to speak, I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

MR. CHAIRMAN: You stand before you are asked. I am calling Shri Ramdas Atahwale for one minute because he has to go somewhere.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Shri Ramdas Athawale is a problem, why you are calling him unnecessarily? He can speak lateron.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him speak. You please sit down.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Is it necessary to call Shri Ramdas Athawale on each and every subject under the sun?

MR. CHAIRMAN: He wants to say something about Mumbai.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: What is an important thing which Shri Ramdas Athawale is going to say and how it is going to enhance the knowledge of the House?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why you are objecting? He has to move an amendment, let him do so.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is an important Bill and I support this Haj Committee Bill. Our Omar Abdullah ji is a very good Minister and that is why when he tendered his resignation it was not accepted. I am also supporting this Bill because you are the Minister incharge. Its office which is in Mumbai. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has to make a very important point, let him speak. When you spoke, nobody interrupted you.

SHRI AKBOR ALI KHANDOKER: What he is talking about resignation. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: I am supporting it. The Bill of Haj Committee is very important.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You speak about your amendment.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: I fully support this Bill. My only demand is that its Head Office which is in Mumbai should remain there. If you want you can open the second office in Delhi; I have to say only this much. At last, I support this Bill once again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you moved any amendment? No notice has been given in regard to Mumbai.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: There is a notice.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It has not come here.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE: It has not come, I have a printed version with me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has expressed his sentiments that Mumbai office should not be shifted.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Hon. Chairperson, we are discussing Haj Committee Bill, 2002.

[Shri Ramji Lal Suman]

This bill has been brought to mitigate problems of Haj pilgrims. This is a good attempt. Just now Ramdas Athawale has said that the headquarters of Haj Committee should be in Mumbai, I do not agree with it.

I have objections on two points pertaining to this Bill. I oppose that its headquarter should be kept in Mumbai. Secondly, provisions have been made in the bill to provide assistance to the state Haj Committee offices for the working in those offices, but no provision has been made for the salaries of staffs of Central office of Haj Committee. This is certainly not a good thing.

Hon. Chairperson, the report of Parliamentary standing Committee pertaining to the Ministry of External Affairs came on 21.8.2001. I want to humbly submit through you that it has been mentioned that they elicited requests from common people and organisations talked with people and have come to the conclusion after discussion with all sections of people. I want to humbly submit that for the location of Central office of Haj Committee, discussion was not held throughout India. I want to say that one meeting was held in Kozhikode, second in Mumbai and Third in Hyderabad. The meeting at Calcutta could not be held due to controversy. All in all, three meetings were held throughout India.

Hon. Chairperson, such meetings were not held in North India, neither in Rajasthan, nor in Uttar Pradesh, nor in Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Bihar nor in Delhi. No consultations with people were held where from 80% people go for Haj. One fourth of the pilgrims go from Uttar Pradesh alone. No consultation was held with such people. Moreover, Omar Abdullah is sitting here, he should be asked whether people of Kashmir were consulted? The Prime Minister of India Atal Bihar Vajpayee comes from Lucknow Parliamentary constituency. Whether people of Lucknow were consulted? Shahnawaj jee comes from Bihar. He is Civil Aviation Minister. Whether people of Bihar were consulted?

Hon. Chairperson, where from 80 percent of people go for Haj no meeting was held there, people of that area were not consulted or taken into confidence. The committee has also mentioned in the Report that it took important suggestions from ex. M.P. Shri Saiyyed Shahabuddin. When the recommendations of Standing Committee come out, a statement of Shahabuddin Saheb was published in the press that he was not in favour of keeping central office of Haj Committee in Mumbai as has been recommended by the Committee. Therefore, I want to say that this is totally impractical and has been recommended without paying attention to the geographical location of India. I also want to humbly submit when people used to go by ship there was utility of keeping the Central Office of Haj Committee in Mumbai, but today due to developed communication and air age not only Mumbai but the whole world has shrunk down. Today people go by air instead of ship. In this situation, there is no justification of keeping the Central Office of Haj Committee in Mumbai.

In the recommendation of the committee it has been provided that after clause by clause consideration the committee recommend that following amendment may be made in Haj Committee Bill, 2002. In the Bill, amendment, recommendations and reasons have been given. In the reasons it has been provided that for Jaddah, Mumbai is a boarding place, basic infrastructure is available here, and permit facilities are available. I want to ask from Minister how many people go Jaddah by Steamer for Haj. I said that utility of Mumbai was existent is past but not now.

Hon. Chairperson, all concerned offices are in Delhi, Haj Directorate is in Delhi, Civil Aviation Ministry is in Delhi, External Affairs Ministry is in Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs is in Delhi. All the Haj related offices are in Delhi. We the Members of Parliament help common man in reaching those offices. After the office is shifted in Mumbai, who will help them?

I would like to make another submission that many Haj pilgrims cannot go for Haj due to certain reasons. They apply, deposit money and despite that they cannot go. For refund, they face many problems. How many people would be able to go to Mumbai to get back money. Therefore, I say that the way in which this is being done is unjustified.

It has been said in it that they want to keep office in Mumbai because this is a big office and its building is very big. Shri Omar Abdullah Saheb, office is not run by big building. You formed three new states—by that time whether their legislative building was ready? Did they had their buildings". We want to say that question is not how big is the office. When every state has state office, what was the use of making zonal offices? Why do you want to put additional burden? Because the work of this committee is not helped by the Government. They are run by the money of Haj pilgrims, therefore, it will be an unnecessary wastage of their money. I think this will not be justified in any way.

I want to make through you one more submission that in this sequence when the recommendations of the

standing Committee came on August 21, 2001, all organisations of Haj Pilgrims met Hon. Shri Jaswant Singh. Members of Parliament also sent applications to the Prime Minister. Before this they come to Delhi and on 2nd of December, 1999 staged demonstration before Parliament House. After that on 8th of April 2000 a big meeting of Haj pilgrims of Purvanchal was held in Venia Bagh, Varansi. They came again to Delhi on 10th of August, 2001. After this they met the Minister of External Affairs on 8th of December, 2001. They wrote an application to the Prime Minister on 26th of November, 2001 which had the signature of all MPs. A memorandum was given wherein it was said that at any cost this office should not remain in Mumbai and it should be shifted to Delhi.

I want to humbly submit, through you, that keeping the central office of Haj Committee in Mumbai is absolutely impractical. If the Government really want to do justice with Haj pilgrims, they should immediately announce that the Central office of Haj Committee ought to be in Delhi.

SHRI RASHID ALVI (Amroha): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would not like to say much on this Bill. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are many speakers who wish to speak, so you should conclude in five minutes.

SHRI RASHID ALVI: I would finish my speech in five minutes, when you are in the Chair I do not take much time.

I would like to thank you for giving me time to express my views. I would like to welcome this Bill but I would like to submit that its head office should be in Delhi. The Members have to listen grievances of Haj Yatris of their respective Parliamentary Constituencies. The MPs of southern states may say that its head office should be in Mumbai. Shri Omar Abdullah, being a Minister, should take decision keeping in view the difficulties faced by the Haj Yatris. The Home Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs are located in Delhi so it would be better to set up its head office in Delhi. The Standing Committee has said that Jeddah in Saudi Arabia is near to Mumbai. It is a irrelevant logic that since Mumbai is near to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia so its head office should be in Mumbai. This is a very irrelevant thing.

I would only make a submission that 75-80 percent Haj Yatris come from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. So the Central Office should be in Delhi. Haj Yatris have to face several difficulties. Sometimes many people who want to go for Haj are unable to go there. Their amount is deposited. They go to pillar to post to get their money back but they do not get any success in this regard.

The main reason is that the office is in Mumbai. Omar Sahib many people come to me who have not gotten their money back so far. I try to contact the Chairman, or Members but they are not available in Mumbai or in Delhi. The Haj yatris are not very rich people. They saved their hard earned money for undertaking Haj pilgrimage. This is a big amount for them. It is very sad that they have to spend money to get their money back. The Government and Haj Committee should make some arrangements to refund their money at the earliest.

The planes should be in good condition. The third point I would like to mention that bunglings occurred in chartered planes by which Haj yatris travel. Several persons tried to earn money through it. There should be transparency in it. The old planes are being used for Haj pilgrimage. The Haj pilgrims face difficulties due to it. It is very sad that people try to earn money through this noble purpose. I request Shri Omar Abdullah to make good arrangements so that the money of pilgrims should be used properly. The good planes should be used for Haj pilgrim. The yatris should know that there is no bungling and nobody earned money through it. I would like to request that there should be transparency in it.

I would conclude in five minutes. In the end I would like to say that the pilgrims do not remain in touch with Haj Committee when they reach Saudi Arabia, Haj Committee does not has any power in Saudi Arabia. In our country the Haj Committee provides facilities to Haj yatris but at Jeddah, Macca, Madina in Saudi Arabia Haj Committee has no power. There is an embassy, but it cannot look after the people. It is very difficult for a common man to contact embassy or councilor. The Government can make an amendment in it or it can be passed now as it is. A rule can be enacted later on so that Haj yatris would not face difficulties. You may be remembering the incident of fire occurred there. Several Indians were killed there in that accident. Several people were missing. The relatives of deceased in India and Saudi Arabia were worried about them. The Haj Committee should be given power for taking care of pilgrims in Saudi Arabia also. A Department should be set up in Embassy which should work under the Haj Committee. This Haj Committee should have power to issue instructions and directions for providing facilities to pilgrims. Omar Sahib I would like to submit one thing

[Shri Rashid Alvi]

that the Haj Committee should be given all powers to look after the interests of pilgrims and take care of them right from the very beginning when they make request for this pilgrimage till their arrival in India after completing their pilgrimage. Such a law would be very useful.

[English]

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri): Madam Chairperson, today is a very happiest day for me in my parliamentary career. I have been demanding for the new Bill on Haj ever since I entered into Parliament in the Tenth Lok Sabha. Today I am very happy my friend, Shri Omar Abdullah, is fortunate enough to move this Bill.

So far as India is concerned, Haj is not a small matter. India is the second largest country in the world in terms of Muslim population. India has now gone up to the level of competing with any other Islamic country in the matter of Haj because there are more than hundred-thousand Hajis taking part in the Haj from India, of which only 77,000 to 80,000 are being managed by the Committee. Rest are as private Hajis.

Therefore, we have been governed by a Haj Committee Act, which unfortunately was very old and in the present circumstances 1959 Act is redundant. At this point of time the Government has come forward to pass this Bill. We are all happy that the Government has taken this step now.

I would like to say that the most important characteristic of this Bill is that this Bill is of a representative character. Secondly, this is a Bill giving accountability to the Haj Committee. I am fortunate to have had the privilege of being associated with Shri Faroook at the time of drafting of this Bill. I have also been associated as Convenor of the Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on External Affairs, which toured several States to elicit public opinion. So, this Bill is not a Bill prepared and drafted only in a Committee Room. This Bill also has the reflection of opinion of a wide spectrum of Muslim community in the country. They have contributed very much to this Bill. The Committee under my leadership visited Mumbai, Calicut, Hyderabad and Kolkata. Also, the Committee, during its sittings here in Delhi, invited a wide spectrum of personalities and experts for their views on Haj arrangements. All of them had given valuable suggestions.

Haj is not an ordinary event. Haj is a bigger Organisation, a bigger arrangement. How we arrange or organise a Haj is what would tell us whether a Haj is good or bad. Many of my hon. colleagues have pointed out here several lapses as well as inadequacies in the management of Haj. It is a very important matter and I hope the Government should take note of it.

My friend, Shri Ramjilal Suman has vehemently opposed the location of the Haj Committee Headquarters at Mumbai but I think it is because of a misconception. The Reserve Bank of India, the major authority dealing with the finances of the country, has its headquarters at Mumbai. Should it be shifted to Delhi? There are many such institutions of Central Govt. having their Headquarters in Mumbai. So far as Haj is concerned, as I stated, Haj is an arrangement which must have a culture of its own. Mumbai has that Haj culture. If it were to be suddenly transferred to Delhi, it would be very difficult for the Government to manage it. Those who are experts in Haj matters are required to be in-charge of the affairs. Mumbai has experienced people in abundance on Haj matter. Again, the various State-level Haj Committees have been given more powers in this Bill. Therefore, there is no difficulty if the Headquarters continues at Mumbai.

As I mentioned that the Committee toured Calicut, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Kolkata. In Mumbai, I recall, the Central Haj Committee itself came before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs and said that it wanted the Headquarters of Haj Committee should continue in Mumbai. If you take the number of Hajis, the largest number is in UP. I do admit it but UP includes Uttaranchal and people from some parts of Madhya Pradesh. The second largest is Maharashtra, the third largest is Gujarat and the fourth largest is Kerala. So, the maximum number of Hajis would be from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Kerala. If those States would like to have the Headquarters in Mumbai, how can you deny it? I am asking a logical question. Therefore, I would ask the hon. Minister—as the Committee suggested—to have the Headquarters in Mumbai and a regional office in Delhi for purposes of efficient functioning of the Haj Affairs. Let there be one more regional office in Lucknow also. I know, the Committee have suggested establishment of one regional office each at Lucknow, Calicut, Kolkata and Srinagar. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is only one State in India where the largest population is from the Muslim community.

The suggestion of the Committee was also lauded even by many of the responsible Ministers. So, what suggested was one in Srinagar, another in Lucknow and third one in Kolkata and the fourth in Calicut may be accepted. It is because hon. Member, Shri Ramji Lal Suman was asking why are we spending money. Why do we require regional offices? But it is a necessity.

Madam, in North-Western region, there are small States. They will find it extremely difficult to travel either to Mumbai or to Delhi. Therefore, we suggested one regional office in Kolkata. ...*(Interruptions)* In Assam also. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ahamed, please stop cross-talking.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI E. AHAMED: Madam, had that provision been inserted here, this confusion would have been over? Therefore, Haj Committee Headquarters, which is there in Mumbai from time immemorial, should not be disturbed at this stage. But there are many amendments to be made. We can very well make those amendments. My hon. colleague. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri E. Ahamed, please wind up.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI E. AHAMED: Madam, I was also very much involved in this Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I know that. That is why, you are an expert.

SHRI E. AHAMED: Madam, Now this is the only Bill on which we would like to contribute. I am sorry, this is one of the Bills. Of course, this is not the only Bill. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ahamed, you can contribute only on this Bill.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI E. AHAMED: Madam, this is a very important Bill. My friend Farook mentioned an amendment. He has mentioned about the functions and responsibilities which is given to the Haj Committee and these should also cover abroad. He has mentioned the word 'abroad'. The Saudi Government is functioning within their own framework. Even if we make such a law, what is the guarantee that the Saudi Government will cooperate with us? In all other Islamic countries Haj matters are being looked after by countries, the Government themselves. Here, because of our Constitution and because of our functions, we constituted a Committee, which is looking after Haj Matters. This Committee is doing everything. But Saudi officials are not prepared to discuss with the Committee. They do only with the government. That is the whole trouble. Saudi officials want everything through the Diplomatic Mission. So, even if there is a provision which we insert here, the Government of Saudi Arabia may not recognise us. This is the whole trouble. Therefore, we must also make sufficient arrangements that our Mission in Jeddah should hold more discussion, more consultation and more association with the Haj Committee on Haj arrangements in Saudi Arabia.

Madam, the House should laud this Bill because this is the only Bill giving the accountability of the Haj Committee to Parliament. For the last several years or several decades what happened to the money collected by them? How have the earlier Haj Committees utilised the money? Have they utilised the money properly? Have they utilised the money in accordance with the responsibility given to them? There is nothing—no audit, no public scrutiny.

Madam, this august House should be happy to know that the present Bill has made a provision that not only accounts should be audited, but all the accounts also should be placed on the Table of this House. With respect to the State Committee, the accounts etc., under the law, should be laid on the Table of the Legislature of the State.

Therefore, without any complaint, let us just pass this Bill today and whatever the amendments including that one is suggested by my dear friend, Shri Ramji Lal Suman with respect to the headquarters, we can think about it later on.

SHRI SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN (Sangrur): Madam Chairperson, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion.

I think, it is the happiest day in the life of the minorities in a secular country like India that the NDA Government has brought forth this Bill which meets the long-pending demands of the Muslim minority, which is the largest minority in India. It brings out clearly the secular credentials of the NDA Government. But Madam Chairperson, the minorities are not understood well enough in this House and in the Indian State.

Now, for instance, this is just one of the demands that the Sikhs have made that they should have an All India Gurdwara Act. This struggle led to 'Operation Bluestar', led to the assassination of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, all of which was very unfortunate. If we are misunderstood and not heeded, I think the minorities will

[Shri Simranjit Singh Mann]

not get justice in the State. For instance, I want to tell you that at the very outset of Independence in 1947, the then Indian Government put the Sikhs in the Criminal Tribes Act. We were called criminals. Then, since the inception of the Indian Constitution in 1950, as per article 25, we, the Sikhs, were clubbed with the Hindus. This is something that we have struggled against. I was very sceptical about the Constitution Review Commission, but fortunately, my scepticism has been put to rest and the Commission has decided that the Sikhs will hereafter have a separate identity and will be called a separate religion. This is a very good thing and I think the NDA Government will swiftly bring in a Constitution Amendment Bill and amend article 25 of the Constitution which is obnoxious to the Sikhs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You must now speak on the Bill, Shri Mann.

SHRI SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN: Madam, this is an opportunity for the minorities that we must also voice our concerns. As I have told you, 'Operation Bluestar' would never have occurred had we been understood by the majority. Now, in the first decade of the 20th Century, a Sikh Marriage Act was enacted by the British Government, but we are still governed by the Hindu Marriage Act and, similarly, we are governed by the Hindu Code Bill. We demand that a separate Bill for all this should be brought before the Parliament.

Like the *Haj* pilgrims who go to Mecca for an annual pilgrimage, the Sikhs also go to Pakistan to visit their holy shrines. As per the Liaquat-Nehru Pact, it was decreed that the Sikhs would visit Pakistan four times, but this year, on the day of the *Baisakhi*, none of us was allowed to visit our holy shrines in Pakistan on the pretext that there was tension between India and Pakistan. But the pilgrimage to Amarnath continues without any let or hindrance, though a lot of pilgrims are murdered by the militants, and the security forces are also shot dead by them. The *Haj* pilgrimage to Pakistan will begin in the second week of June this year and I hope, the hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, who is steering this Bill, will keep our *jathas* in mind for June.

We, the minorities, have very little say in the enactment of India's foreign, defence and home policies. To drive the lesson home, I would just give you one example.

There was a great reign of terror and persecution of the Hindus in Bangladesh. The Government of India sent specially its National Security Adviser, Shri Brajesh Mishra to Dhaka and he resolved the issue. Though I am still not satisfied with the policies of the Bangladesh Government *vis-a-vis* the treatment of the Hindu citizens, yet, nevertheless, there was a gesture by the Government of India.

A similar thing happened to the Sikhs in the USA last year after the 11th September attacks. We were mistaken as Arabs and Afghanistanis and what not. The Sikhs were massacred in a spate of hate crime by the Americans. Madam Chairperson, the hon. Prime Minister went to the United States; the hon. Minister of Home Affairs went to the United States and the hon. Minister of External Affairs went to the United States. My complaint is that none of them took up the persecution of the Sikhs in United States with the State Department or with President Bush. This is a very discriminatory thing. I think the Indian Government should have, at that time, thought about giving advertisements in the American papers saying that the Sikhs are not Iranians, Iraqis or Afghanistanis.

Day before yesterday I tried to explain the issue of Operation Bluestar. But, unfortunately, there was a great shemozzle in this House then. It was not my purpose to set the cat amongst the pigeons. But I do not know how the two estranged parties got at each other's neck. The question was raised by one Party and your party acceded to my request that an apology to the Sikhs should be given whereas the Treasury Benches opposed it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Chair does not belong to any Party.

SHRI SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN: They said that it was the work of the Congress. Madam Chairperson, if national policies are to be governed by the Party which does the act, I do not think Korean people could have ever got an apology from the Japanese. The successive Governments to the War Cabinet of Japan could have said that this was the work of Prime Minister Tojo and Emperor Hirohito and the same thing could have been attributed by the Germans to the Nazis and they would have never apologised to the Jews. Similarly the Americans would have never apologised to their Japanese citizens had they taken this plea and said that President Roosevelt imprisoned his own Japanese citizens.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Mann, please conclude. There is no time.

SHRI SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN: Madam, I will take a minute.

I will be very grateful if the minorities are also given some time to tell their woes, to tell their troubles. I am very grateful for the opportunity I have been given. I support this very great Bill. It is a landmark in India's secular history.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Shri P.C. Thomas to speak now. Shri Thomas, I am giving you three minutes.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Thank you Madam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We do not want only one community to support the Bill. You are all supporting it. Please support it and speak only for three minutes.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: I will confine to the time.

SHRI E. AHAMED: Shri Thomas, you can speak, not necessarily on the Bill, but on anything.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ahamed, he does not need your advice. He will speak what he wants.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Madam, I often speak only for two minutes. I am very happy that on this auspices day, during the 50th year of this Parliament, we are about to pass a very important Bill which will give a sense of security and a feeling of patriotism for all sections of India and especially to the minorities.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your patriotism does not depend on this Bill.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Patriotism in the sense that it is the duty of each individual to the country.

I think, we are executing a very important duty.

SHRI SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN: Madam Chairperson, the hon. Member is saying that everyone will have a sense of belonging. That is what he means.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: It could be more than the sense of belonging. Now, to strengthen that, I think this Bill will be of great importance. Madam, I would submit one or two small changes with regard to this Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You cannot move amendments now.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS: Yes, I cannot move amendments to the Bill, but these changes could be considered. It was suggested that the law must be implemented immediately. I would like to submit with regard to Section 15 and Section 27. Section 15 deals with Central Committee and Section 27 deals with State Committee. Regarding filling up of the vacancies, I would submit that if the Government could fix up a time for filling up of the vacancies, that would have been very good because it has to be done immediately.

Now, I think that the Section which says about the Head Office at Mumbai, is well taken care of by the additional statement that regional Offices may be opened in consultation with the Central Government in any other place. So, I think that the provision is good enough and there may be necessity for Regional Offices because more and more of pilgrims are coming out from many areas, including my State, Kerala. I know that much more number of pilgrims will come after the enactment of this Bill because the duties which are going to be given to the Committee will take care of many of the facilities which are to be given to these large number of pilgrims, who are going to go from India. I think that this Bill is to be welcomed and the provisions of the Bill are also to be welcomed.

I think that this democratic way of Committee formation, the accountability which has been stated here and the way in which the composition of the Committee has been distributed are well enough to be accepted. I think, the number of pilgrims which is increasing every year will increase further. As has been stated, there were 24,000 pilgrims in 1992 and the number rose to 72,000 in the last year. I think, it will be more than a lakh under the control of this Committee itself. So, it is very important to see that the facilities are improved. The implementation of the duties of the Committee is very important. I think that the complaints with regard to the Committee or with regard to the functioning of the Committee are also to be taken care of. Of course, there are some powers which are given to the Central Government also in case there is a necessity of monitoring. I think, that has to be taken very serious note of.

As has been stated, there are practical difficulties. In Saudi Arabia, there are so many practical difficulties which are arising. I think, those things are to be taken care of but the functioning of the Committee can be confined only to India as far as this Bill is concerned. I would submit that in whatever way our Foreign Mission could act in this regard to expand the functioning of it, it would be helpful. Of course, it has been stated in the Bill that it could be in India, but as far as diplomatic relations are concerned, the Committee as well as the Government

[Shri P.C. Thomas]
may take all steps in this regard to see that the functioning is well maintained.

Lastly, many pilgrims are going from my State, Kerala. There are, of course, some facilities which are given at the airport, at the Kolkata Airport and two other airports. I think, some more facilities are required. Of course, it does not directly come under the purview of this Bill. I would submit that not only at these three airports but also at other airports, many facilities have been given, but these facilities can be improved further. If these facilities can be improved, it will be of great help to the *Hajis*.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj): Madam, from the Congress Party, we welcome this legislation and thank the distinguished Minister for having brought it to the House. I also congratulate Shri M.O.H. Farook for his devoted work in this Committee in the first stage of drafting followed by the second stage of drafting and his contribution, along with Shri Ahamed.

I have nothing much to add except three things, and I will do so in four minutes. First, for the last many years, there is a misconception in the country that the Government is giving extra support to Haj pilgrims. This misconception should be dispelled because a secular country like India has certain obligations to different sections of people, including protecting the rights of the minorities.

In this regard, many people may not know about it, I would like to point out that in all the *Kumbh Melas*, it is the Government of the State that takes care of the whole responsibility and it spends a huge amount on setting up of the infrastructure. In the State of West Bengal, every year, we spend huge amounts on pilgrims who come to the *Ganga Sagar Mela*. We also spend huge amounts on Amarnath *Yatris*. We also spend money on several religious festivals and on pilgrims. Therefore, it is not correct to say that this Government, from the very beginning, is taking care of Muslim pilgrims only. This misconception should be removed. In our State, Shri Hannan Mollah will agree with me, during the *Durga Puja*, which is a regular feature in Bengal, to accommodate the pedestrians in the city of Kolkata in a proper way, the entire cost is borne by the State Government, which is not for one day, but for ten days. Therefore, it should not be construed by any section in the country that the Government of India is accommodating, supporting and giving money only to a particular section. We are doing nothing other than accommodating them in the best possible manner. I feel that much more should have been done.

Thirdly, I would like to refer to the Mumbai-Delhi controversy over the headquarters. Earlier, possibly, it was planned to be located in Mumbai because it has a seaport and it could meet all the logistic demands. I am not saying that it should be located there only. Had it been my intention, I would have moved an amendment. Now, the central congregation point is definitely Delhi, under the umbrella of the Home Ministry and the External Affairs Ministry, where the pilgrims can interact with the Embassy. If it is the regional offices—in South, it can be located either in Calicut or Bangalore; in the West, it can be in Mumbai; and in the East, it can be either in Guwahati or Kolkata, but certainly, the supervisory headquarters should be located in Delhi. If it cannot be considered today, the Minister can certainly think over it later on. I do not want to pick up a fight on this. If the headquarters is in Delhi, it would be more appropriate.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to clause 16. It has been stated that the Committee should be so powerful and so effective that it can deliver goods. I am not saying that the Committee cannot deliver the goods. Clause 16 says:

> "The Central Government shall appoint a person from a panel of Muslims officers of the Central Government and of State Governments not below the rank of Deputy Secretary to the Government of India."

My appeal to the hon. Minister is that instead of saying 'not below the rank of a Deputy Secretary', you should say 'not below the rank of a Joint Secretary' because the Chief Executive Officer of this Committee is to interact with the Ambassador, the Embassy officials and the Government of India for several days. If a Joint Secretary-level officer interacts as the Chief Executive Officer, then a lot of credence will be given to his words rather than to the words of a Deputy Secretary.

With these words, I conclude my speech and thank the Minister for bringing this Bill.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would only like to submit that earlier it had its head office in Mumbai because people used to go for Haj pilgrimage by ship. Now people with vested interests want that head office should remain in Mumbai. Many people of Haj Seva Samiti come to me. Their submission was that its head office should be in Delhi. I support this Bill. If there is any conspiracy that would not be tolerated. Delhi is the capital of India and all the head offices are situated here. Now people go to Haj by

air. I would like to say that its head office should be in Delhi. Its Regional Offices can be set up at Mumbai or in other States.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Abdullakutty, what is the point you are trying to make? I will just you one minute. The time for the debate is over now. There is one more Bill to be taken up after this and then we have the discussion on Bihar. I cannot call anybody's name now.

SHRI A.P. ABDULLAKUTTY (Cannanore): Madam, I would like to mention just three points.

The question of recruiting *Haj* volunteers is very important. Recruiting volunteers from India is a very costly thing and also gives rise to complaints. So, it is better to recruit them from Saudi Arabia. So many Indians who are working there have settled down in that country for employment. If people, who are not *Haj* pilgrims, are taken from India, then there is every possibility that they would misuse this opportunity. They would simply take this opportunity for making personal gains.

Madam, secondly, the States and the Centre together should provide sufficient funds for effective functioning of the All India *Haj* Committee. The contribution from the individuals alone is not sufficient. I strongly plead that the concessions as are now being given to the *Haj* pilgrims should be continued. It symbolises the secular character of India.

Madam, finally, the private agencies who are engaged in the transit of *Haj* pilgrims exploit them by charging heavy traveling expenses. Different agencies charge different rates. There is no uniformity in the charges. The *Haj* Committee should look into this aspect and the charges must be made uniform.

Sir, with these words, I strongly support the Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAKASH PARANJPE (Thane): Madam Chairperson, it is not mentioned in Quran that if people do not go to Haj, they would not salvaged. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: We would not like to have discussion over this issue.

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: Madam, this is too much. This remark should be deleted from the records. ...*(Interruptions)* It should be expunged from the records. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing, except what is said by the Minister, would go on record.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAKASH PARANJPE: Madam Chairperson, people who do not go to perform Haj, do they not get salvation. ...*(Interruptions)**

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. Nothing is going on record.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Madam chairperson, a very serious Bill is being discussed. ...*(Interruptions)**

[English]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: This is too much. This Parliament cannot encourage this kind of a thing everyday. ...*(Interruptions)* What does he think of himself? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing is going on record.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: The Government has brought forward this Bill and we are supporting it and he is saying all these things. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why are you getting provoked by him? The Minister is giving reply. Nothing is going on record.

...*(Interruptions)**

MR. CHAIRMAN: You please ignore his remarks. Why are you getting provoked by his comments. Please sit down. Let the Minister reply now.

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*Not Recorded.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Madam Chairperson, it is very sad....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister would give a reply. Please sit down.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): Madam Chairperson, for the entire duration of this debate and till I got up to respond, I took great satisfaction from the fact that this debate rose above religious differences; it rose above finger-pointing and casting aspersions. In fact, I took a great degree of satisfaction from my hon. friend and Member of this House, Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi's speech where he conveyed—what perhaps I could not have done because I am a Muslim and for me to have said what Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi said would perhaps have been taken incorrectly—that what Governments do, they do not just do to appease one community. I belong to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi was able to allude to the fact that the West Bengal Government does things in their State for other communities. I know for a fact what my State does during the Amarnath *Yatra*. The amount of money that is spent in indirect subsidy on Amarnath *Yatra*, I know. I spent three years studying in Mumbai in college. I know what arrangements the State Government makes for the various festivals, particularly when the statues of Ganapatiji are immersed in the ocean. Yes, there is a difference between direct subsidy and indirect subsidy...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GUDHE (Amrawati): They do not get subsidy.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Let me reply.

[English]

Because this is a direct subsidy and others are indirect subsidies, this perhaps irks people. This question was raised as to whether if money is spent on behalf of a Haji, Haj is considered complete or not. Yes, there is a debate within the informed sections of Islam whether this is true or not. But it is not for us to question. At the end of the day, this money is the people's money. It is not coming out of some individual's pocket. Government of India raises money from the people through taxes. It does not say that this is Hindu money, Sikh money, Christian money or Muslim money. It is Government's money. Were some hon. Members of this House to suggest that we collect only Muslim money and then put those notes into the Haj, that is inconceivable. The fact is that the money comes into the Central kitty. It is Government money. It has been collected from all sections of society and it is spent on all sections of society. That is the end of that.

It is also the commitment of this Government that we would like to bring down the expenditure. In keeping with this, whatever needs to be done in terms of reviewing and gradually making the Muslim community of India capable of going for Haj in the same numbers, if not larger numbers, the need for increased subsidy, we will work with the Muslim community of this country to ensure that happens. For the time being, we will not do anything that will affect the ability of the weaker sections of the Muslim community to travel to Saudi Arabia and perform the Haj rituals.

This aside, Madam Chairperson, I would like to place on record my deep sense of gratitude to all the Members who participated in this debate. As I said, they raised the debate above the levels of caste and religious divisions and brought in some very valid points about the Haj, the Central Haj Committee, and the way in which it performs. Broadly, the debate touched on three areas—the location of the Central Haj Committee Office, the role that the Central Haj Committee plays or does not play in Saudi Arabia, and the transparency that is required. Transparency involves the accommodation and all other aspects of the functioning of the Central Haj Committee as well as the Government. I will touch on each of these areas individually.

On the location of the Central Haj Committee Office and whether it should be in Mumbai or Delhi, initially the Government of India, when they had brought about the first draft of this, had suggested that the Central Haj Committee would be located in Delhi for the same reasons that hon. Members mentioned with regard to Delhi being the capital, proximity to all the various Government offices and the various other facts that would be part of this. The entire Bill was referred to the Standing Committee of the Ministry of External affairs. They considered all the pros and cons of shifting this office, all the various other aspects of it.

16.00 hrs.

Madam Chairperson, I may be incorrect in my assessment but my understanding is that the Standing

Committees of Parliament are reflective of the opinion within Parliament. They do not reflect any one school of thought, any one religion. To suggest that the Standing Committee of Parliament recommended the retention of this in Mumbai or it is part of a broader plot or a plan, would be incorrect.

The figures are available with me. As per those figures, amongst the 45 Members of the Standing Committee, 44 recommended that the Central Haj Committee Office be retained in Mumbai. Now, this is not part of some plot on the part of the people living in Mumbai. It is not part of some plot on the part of the Government. It is straight and straight.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: It is mentioned in the list of business that discussion on Bihar will be taken up at 4 o'clock.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The reply to this Bill is going on. Yes, there was supposed to be a discussion on Bihar issue at 4 o'clock. But let the Bill be passed first. Within a few minutes, we will pass it and then go to Discussion on Bihar.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I disagree with this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am taking permission from the House.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I take the sense of the House that we will complete this Bill within 10 minutes and then take up the discussion on Bihar. Does the House agree?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I disagree with this. Will you do anything by taking permission to the House?...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have taken the sense of the House.

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: I disagree with this...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are the only one who disagree, otherwise all Members are agreed on this.

...(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will be finished in just ten minutes.

...(Interruptions)

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH: The time for which we waited for years has come now...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: When I asked you not to speak because it has to be finished even then you are speaking?

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Madam, Chairperson, if I am not interrupted, I will finish it in about 10 minutes...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, do not disturb the Minister when he is replying. We will finish it quickly.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: As I said, Madam, the Standing Committee on the Ministry of External Affairs examined all the pros and cons; looked into the aspect of shifting of the office and its viability.

There was only one dissenting voice amongst the Members of the Standing Committee. Forty-four Members of the Standing Committee were of the unanimous opinion that the Central Haj Committee Office should be retained in Mumbai for very simple reasons. I know people alluding to the fact that Mumbai being close to *Jeddah* is not relevant from the point of view that it is not a sea journey that is undertaking nowadays. But one fact that they perhaps slipped their attention is the fact that by and large direct flight connectivity between India and Saudi Arabia is better from Mumbai than it is from Delhi. So, that of course, was one factor.

[Shri Omar Abdullah]

But more importantly than that, the Central Haj Committee functions on a 'no profit no loss' basis. For them to be able to recreate infrastructure in Delhi at this time when the Government is trying to bring down costs, for them to be able to shift all operations at this stage would also have been extremely inconvenient.

16.04 hrs.

[SHRI P.H. PANDIAN *in the Chair*]

Yes, it was suggested that six regional offices be opened. And this is not a recommendation that the Government of India has dismissed. All that the Government of India is saying is that 'Right now, when we are trying to strengthen the State Haj Committees and we want the State Haj Committees to play a greater role, we feel that it is unnecessary to put greater burden on the Central Haj Committee.' But as and when the Central Haj Committee feels that it is necessary to open regional offices in other parts of India, the Government of India will be going along with this recommendation.

So, all that is to do with the location of the Central Haj Committee Office.

Now, as far as the role of the Central Haj Committee within Saudi Arabia is concerned, this is also incorrect to suggest that the Central Haj Committee has no role to play in Saudia Arabia because that is not true. The Central Haj Committee plays a very important role. Perhaps, one of the aspects in the Haj in Saudi Arabia is the accommodation selection. The State Haj Committees send, what is known as, building selection teams. These building selection teams select buildings according to the specifications that are laid down by the Government of India, which means that the buildings must not be more than a fixed distance away *Kaba Shareef*, the buildings must all have lifts; the buildings must all have telephones and other facilities.

Once these buildings are earmarked, then the Central Haj Committee sends officers to approve these buildings that have been selected by the Building Selection teams. At no stage is the building selection or selection of accommodation, purely a responsibility of the Ministry of External Affairs. Both the State Haj Committees as well as the Central Haj Committee are indeed part of the process of building/accommodation selection, at every stage.

In fact, in Medina Sharief, the accommodation in Medina is selected only by the Central Haj Committee. In fact, the Ministry of External Affairs has no role to play in the selection of accommodation in Medina.

Even as far as transport agreements are concerned, the transport agreements between the Saudi Transport Syndicate and the Haj Committee are entered into or signed by the Chairman and the Members of the Central Haj Committee. The Chairman and the Members of the Central Haj Committee are also involved in the process of air chartering. So, the Central Haj Committee is kept a part of the process; they are involved in all the crucial processes with regard to accommodation and transport, both in India as well as in Saudi Arabia. This role will continue to remain and we will continue to involve the Central Haj Committee in all the important aspects of the arrangements that are to be made both within India as well as in Saudi Arabia.

The third part pertains to the transparency and the financial aspects of the Haj. Sometimes, there have been allegations of lack of transparency or financial mismanagement within the Central Haj Committee and in activities associated with it. In keeping with this, it was my commitment to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, when I visited last year to sign the agreement, that each and every one of the contracts entered into for hiring of accommodation would be provided to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This would allow them to investigate in their own way, whether the price paid was correct, whether there was any under-hand dealings in selection and hiring of accommodation, etc. This is something that we have done and we will continue to do.

Aside from that, to ensure that Parliament is kept a part of the process and there is never an allegation again that Parliament does not know what is happening with the money, audited accounts of the Central Haj Committee will be placed on the Tables of the Lok Sabha and of the Rajya Sabha.

During the course of the debate in Rajya Sabha, an hon. Member made a suggestion that perhaps the Central Haj Committee could be brought under the purview of the Vigilance Wing of the Ministry of External Affairs. We felt that this was an excellent suggestion. Once the bye-laws of the Central Haj Committee Act of 2002 are framed, the functioning of the Central Haj Committee will be brought under the purview of the Vigilance Wing of the Ministry of External Affairs, to ensure that no allegation of financial mismanagement go uninvestigated and unpunished.

There were points that some of the hon. Members made with regard to refunds that have to be made to the pilgrims. Yes, Madam Chairperson, this would be something that would be a cause of major concern.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: 'Chairman' has taken over now.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Sorry. Kindly excuse me, Sir. I had not seen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are making me 'Madam'. Do not make me 'Madam'!

The other day, I said that Parliament has got all the powers except to make 'man a woman and woman a man'.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: I will not do that Mr. Chairman, Sir. That power is not even in my hands.

SHRI SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it only means that Indian Parliament has the power to make you a woman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is why, Parliament is sovereign and supreme!

SHRI SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN: It means that this is the most powerful institution than the British Parliament itself.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: That means, I was not paying attention to see who is in the Chair and I was paying attention to what I was supposed to be saying. But perhaps, I should have been more careful.

Anyway, Sir, with regard to refunds to pilgrims, which was talked about, I can understand that this would be a cause of major concern to pilgrims who have put a lot of their hard earned money into it. In the byelaws that are to be framed, we will have to take into account this very important aspect and ensure that a time-line is fixed for refund of money to the pilgrims. It has been our endeavour to ensure that the money comes back as swiftly as possible.

Sometimes, there is a problem with regard to the claims that are made and the validity of those claims. But as soon as the claims are found to be valid, the money is refunded. We will also have to look at the possibility of whether we can involve the State Haj Committees more actively. It is because they are the people who are in touch with the pilgrims; and better coordination between the State Haj Committees and the Central Haj Committee will perhaps allow us to refund this money earlier.

SHRI E. AHAMED: Anybody can go for *haj*, either through some group or through the private operators. The private operators are taking about 30,000 *hajis* from India. But those private operators are not accountable to Indian Government. There is no regulation on them. Of course, it is difficult to put a check on them because persons can go independently. We cannot regulate them. But if something happens to these *hajis* after arriving at Mecca and Madina or on performing Haj, since they are the citizens of India, our Mission there will not be able to know anything. Will the Government consider making some arrangement so that such *hajis* also report to our Mission so that they oversee them in case there is any danger to their life?

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a fact that a much larger number of complaints come from *hajis* who travel through the private tour operators than from the *hajis* who travel under the umbrella of the Central Haj Committee. We are working with the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to see how best we can ensure that the *hajis* who travel under the auspices of the private tour operators also receive the sort of amenities and facilities that the *hajis* who travel under the Central Haj Committee umbrella receive.

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is right that Government of Uttar Pradesh should do this work. A land was purchased in Okhla on behalf of Haj Committee of Government of Uttar Pradesh on which their office can be built. Today the price of that land is Rs. 150 crore. This piece of land was purchased during the period of my Chief Ministership through Government of Uttar Pradesh. A Haj building (Bhawan) was to be constructed on that land but today encroachment of that land is being done. Uttar Pradesh Haj Committee is not interested in building a Haj Bhawan on that land. My submission is that if you could interfere or the Central Government could give some help then people who go for Haj will have facility to stay there. I took this decision for the convenience of Haj pilgrims. Today the price of that land in Okhla is Rs. 150 crore.

My submission is that either the Government construct a Haj Bhawan on that land, or both the Central Government and Government of Uttar Pradesh interfere

[Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav]

or by giving instructions or providing aid in constructing Haj Bhawan by Haj Committee. I am sure that the Government will have the interest in constructing Bhawan on that land. It will be better if the Government make some efforts in this regard. I regret that inspite of providing such a valuable land, no work is being done on that land. Apart from that, I had given some extra fund but even after that Haj Committee did not get any work done. The Government should see that matter.

[English]

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Sir, the State Haj Bhavans are the direct responsibility of the State Government and the State Haj Committees. That having been said, if there are any concrete suggestions that the hon. Member, Shri Mulayam Singh has, if he can send them to me, we will have them examined and if they are viable we will take them up.

As I was saying, Mr. Chairman, Sir, so that I could finish as quickly as possible, a number of Members who spoke alluded to the fact that *hajis* come back from Saudi Arabia extremely dissatisfied with the arrangements and the experience that they have there. That having been the case, this year we tried to ascertain how much weightage is there in this allegation that by and large *hajis* come back unhappy with the experience that they have. Therefore, we circulated Post-Haj Survey forms amongst a large number of *hajis* who came back from there, who were travelling under the auspices of the Central Haj Committee. In fact they were circulated in English, Hindi, Urdu, Malyalam and Tamil to get as broad a sample as possible and the results were revealing in as much as we found that only five per cent of the pilgrims found accommodation in Mecca to be unsatisfactory; only seven per cent found it in Madina; only five per cent found the staff in Mecca Shareef to be unsatisfactory; eight per cent were unhappy with the airport service and only three per cent found the medical staff unsatisfactory. When you look at the fact that 72,000 people travel under the umbrella of the Central Haj Committee, the percentages of dissatisfaction in single digit, I think, is a credit both to the Central Haj Committee for the role that they perform and also for the officials of my Ministry stationed in Saudi Arabia for whom the arrangements of *haj* are more a labour of love than a part of the job, because they rise over and above the work that is expected of them officially, to ensure that the *haj* arrangements year-in-year-out get better and not worse.

Sir, finally, it has been and will continue to be the endeavour of this Government to improve the Haj arrangements. One last point I would like to end on is the point that one of the hon. Members made that Hajis are not allowed to fly back with their Aab-e-Zamzam. Sir this is incorrect. All Hajis are allowed to fly back with 10 litres of Aab-e-Zamzam in their accompanied baggage. Anything over and above that must come in separate aircraft as part of cargo. Not only that, the airlines also make arrangements of bottles of Aab-e-Zamzam on the plane to be given to those Hajis who are unable to carry Aab-e-Zamzam with them on to the aircraft. So, it is the endeavour not only of the Government but also of the airlines to ensure that the Hajis got as complete an experience as possible and come back as satisfied with the Haj arrangements.

Sir, with this, I would like to commend this Bill to the House and request that the Bill be passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill to establish a Haj Committee of India and State Haj Committees for making arrangements for the pilgrimage of Muslims for Haj, and for matters connected therewith, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 4 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 4 was added to the Bill.

Clause 5 was added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 6 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 6 was added to the Bill.

Clause 7 and 8 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri G.M. Banatwalla—not present.

Shri M.O.H. Farook, are you moving your amendments?

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK (Pondicherry): Sir, I do not insist.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That clause 9 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 9 was added to the Bill.

Clause 10 and 11 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri G.M. Banatwalla—not present.

Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 12 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 12 was added to the Bill.

Clause 13 and 15 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri G.M. Banatwalla—not present.

Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 16 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 16 was added to the Bill.

Clause 17 to 19 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 20 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 20 was added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 21 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 21 was added to the Bill.

Clause 22 was added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Clause 23.

Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 23 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 23 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 24 to 26 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri G.M. Banatwalla—not present.

Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 27 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 27 was added to the Bill.

Clause 28 was added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri G.M. Banatwalla—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 29 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 29 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 30 to 49 were added to the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Ramdas Athawale—not present.

The question is:

"That clause 50 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 50 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 51 and 52 were added to the Bill.

The Schedule was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and Long Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): As a Member representing Mumbai, let me thank the Minister for keeping the headquarters in Mumbai. I am indeed grateful to him...*(Interruptions)* I wanted to bring it on record.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up item No. 16.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (Raiganj): We should take up Discussion under Rule 193...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Should we take up Discussion under Rule 193 or item No. 16?

...*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): Sir, this is a very important legislation...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: No. I would like to submit that Discussion under Rule 193 should have been taken up at 4 o'clock. But the Chair gave a direction that after passing the Haj Bill, the Bihar issue would be taken up. Let us not delay the discussion. Discussion under Rule 193 should be taken up first...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Minister says that we wants just five minutes.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: We want to discuss the Bill...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, you want to discuss the Bill.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: You want a detailed discussion on the Bill.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI: It cannot be passed without discussion...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right, we will take up item No. 17.

Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh.

16.25 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Financial Package for the State of Bihar

[Translation]

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali): Mr. Chairman Sir, on behalf of 8 crore, 30 lakh, 55 thousand